


Our
New Home
and **Old Times**

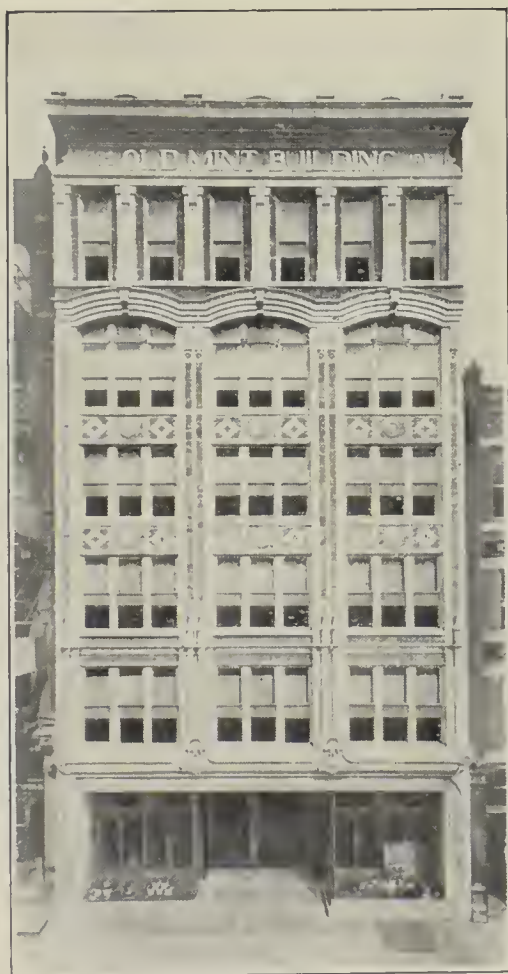




ON THIS SITE
WAS ERECTED
THE FIRST U.S. MINT
A. D. 1792
FIRST
PUBLIC BUILDING
AUTHORIZED
BY CONGRESS.
COINAGE CONTINUED
HERE 40 YEARS.
BUILDING RAZED
A. D. 1911.

BRONZE TABLET ON THE FRONT OF THE NEW BUILDING.

OUR NEW HOME



FRANK H. STEWART
ELECTRIC COMPANY

OLD MINT BUILDING
37 & 39 N. SEVENTH ST.
PHILADELPHIA

Copyright 1913
Frank H. Stewart Electric Co.
Philadelphia, Pa.



OUR NEW HOME

OUR new building, known as the "Old Mint Building," is probably the first new building to be called an old building in the history of architecture.

The interior photographs reproduced in this booklet were taken before our stock had been entirely placed, but will give a fair idea of the size of our building, which is one hundred and sixteen feet deep and thirty-seven feet wide in the front, and fifty-seven feet wide in the rear because of the frontage on Filbert street.

The width of the building and the arrangement of the centre supporting columns are such that satisfactory photographs could not be taken so as to show both sides of each floor. The photographs therefore necessarily show either side or corner views.

The building is L shaped and occupies three city lots, Nos. 37 and 39 North Seventh street and 631 Filbert street, and is next door to our old location, 35 North Seventh street.

It has a freight elevator on Filbert street, a fire tower on an alley in the rear of the building, and a passenger elevator on Seventh street, also a dumb elevator and a chute, three stairways and tramways for handling heavy materials.

It is built of steel, concrete and brick, and is a fire-proof building of the best type. Over one thousand steel bins are placed in the third and fourth floors alone. These bins are three feet wide, thirty-two inches deep, eighteen inches high, and adjustable. These if placed end to end would reach over half a mile in a straight line. The fifth and sixth floors are used for goods in original cases, the first floor as a store and shipping room, and the basement, which is eleven feet in depth, is used for iron conduits and heavy materials, such as



porcelain, glass, etc. The entire second floor is used for office purposes.

The architectural appearance of the front of the building easily places it among Philadelphia's most artistic and pleasing modern buildings. It is of glazed tile and tapestry brick.

Strength, utility and beauty, without extravagance, have been combined in the erection of this building and installation of its equipment. The electrical materials were made by manufacturers who are noted for the superior quality of their products, and taken by the electrical contractor right from our own stock.

The steam heat is furnished by two large boilers, which can be used together or separately. The plans were made to take care of a sprinkler system which will be put in later, after our stock placing arrangements are completed.

The historical feature of the site is perpetuated by bronze tablets and the name of the building.

In the demolition of the old buildings many interesting finds were made and these will be fully described in a history of the property now about to be published.

The weight capacity of the building is sufficient to load a freight train a mile long, thirty thousand pounds to the car.

The building was erected by the president of our Company for the sole use of our business and is a physical illustration of the business principles and policies formed and followed in the development of our business. Unswerving fidelity to those characteristics which have enabled us to occupy what is said by many who have a knowledge of the facts to be the best building in America, devoted exclusively to an electrical supply business will be maintained.

For a great many years we have been more or less hampered by not having sufficient room to satisfactorily handle our congested stocks located in the old buildings and neighboring warehouses, and our customers and friends now have



BENCH MADE OF OAK TIMBERS OF THE COINAGE BUILDING OF THE OLD
MINT. PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT OF OUR
CONCERN, CHRISTMAS 1911.



CHAIRS OF ANTIQUE DESIGNS MADE OF OAK FROM THE COINAGE BUILDING
OF THE OLD MINT, ERECTED IN 1792.



THE HAND MADE LOCK OF THE OLD MINT OFFICE BUILDING ON
SEVENTH STREET. THE ONE OFF THE COINAGE
BUILDING IS VERY SIMILAR.



a right to expect even better stocks and service than we have been able to offer and give them in the past.

We were the first, and consequently now the oldest, to do an exclusively electrical supply business in the City of Philadelphia, and it is a curious coincidence that we should occupy the site of the first U. S. Mint, as well as the first property purchased for the erection of the first public building by authority of congress, during the first administration of our first president, the immortal George Washington. Certain rare coins made in the old buildings we tore down have recently sold at auction at prices ranging from one hundred to thirty-six hundred dollars each. Individual examples of each of the gold, silver and copper coins made in the first U. S. Mint in perfect condition would bring more at auction than it cost to erect our new building, and that is no small sum. We have a modest collection, sufficiently large enough to enthuse those interested in old and rare coins, some of which were found on the site of the old mint building.

We invite you to investigate our new building, stock and equipments. Any one of our officers or employees will take great pleasure in showing you the many new ideas which will be used in our electrical supply house for the first time. Our business was established in January, 1894, and we are making a collection of electrical antiquities which were in use at the time we started in business nineteen years ago, to show you, if you are interested in the great strides made in electrical appliances.

The following was penned for us by a man who started as a wireman in December, 1882. His experience in the electrical installation branch of business has been continuous, and he is one of that constantly decreasing number of pioneers of the electrical business.

He is now employed in a semi-public capacity, and we regret that his modesty is such that he asked us not to publish his name. He, however, is one of the best known local elec-



trical men of the day. Our museum contains a piece of wire he installed twenty-five years ago, during the blizzard of 1888.

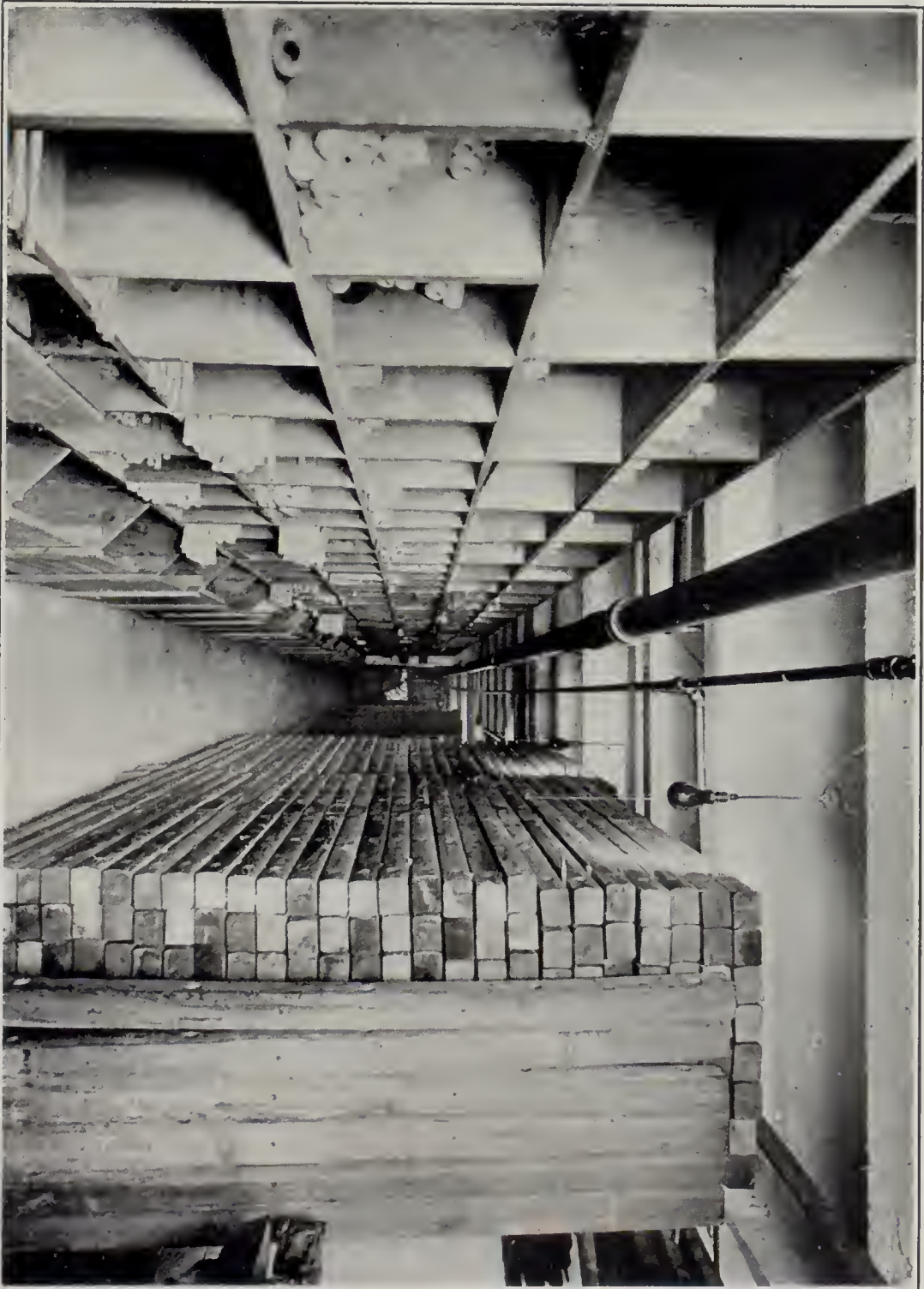
EARLY WIRING.

"A few brief remarks on early electrical construction may be appropriate at this time, considering the numerous changes which have taken place during the thirty years of incandescent electric light construction and insulation. To look back to that period from the present time is to smile and wonder how it could have been so crude.

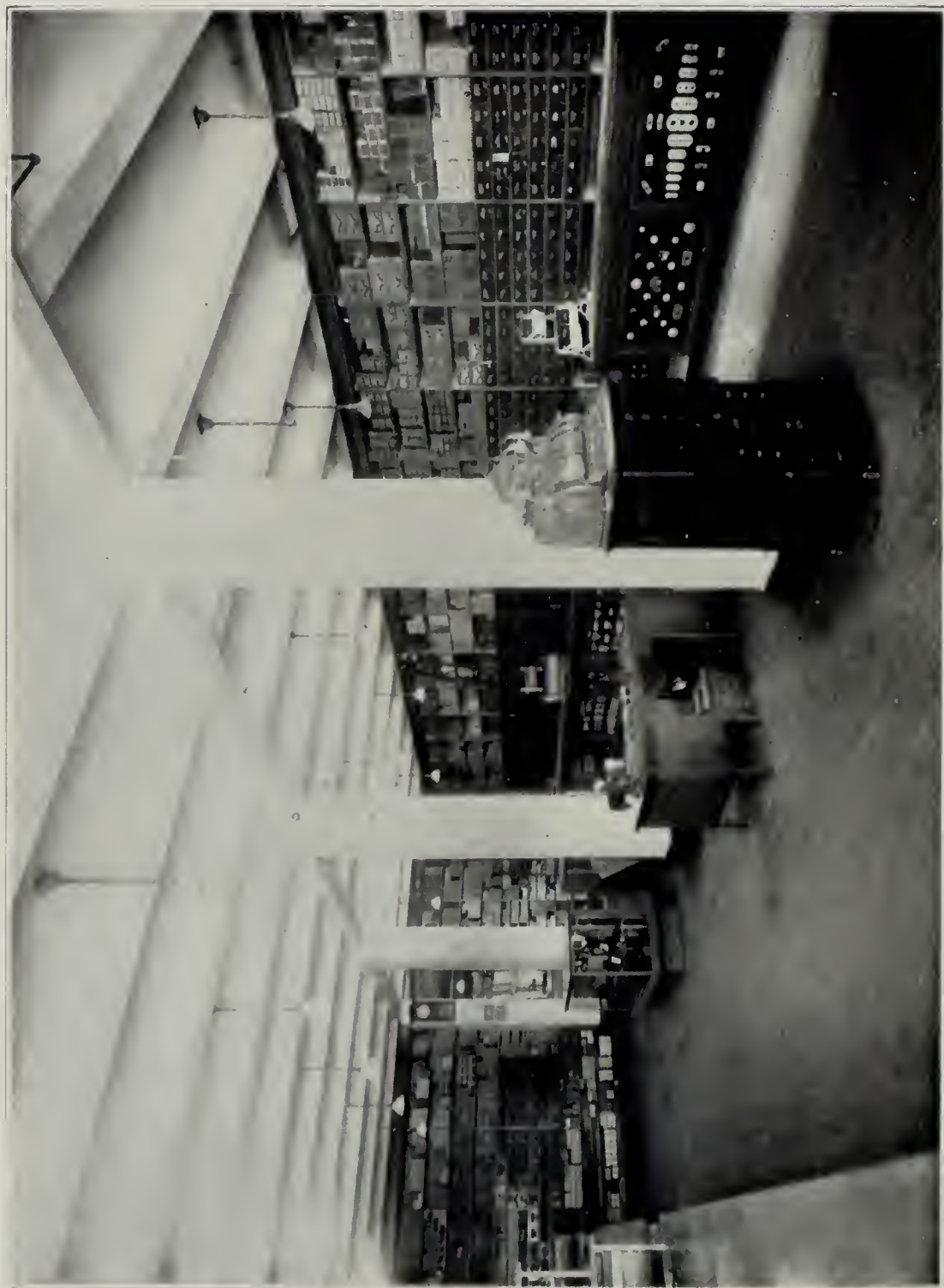
"The writer recalls when there was only one grade of insulation used and two colors of wire. The grade of insulation was what was afterward known as Underwriters, and the colors were black and white. The method of installing was that white wire was used for positive, and black wire was used for negative, throughout the entire plant, and should it be necessary to make extensions the same rule was followed and the impression was given the mechanic that if the colors were changed the circuits would not work. It was not out of the ordinary for an employee going out on repairs and extensions, to request two colors of wire for the job.

"The cutouts in use in that period were constructed entirely of wood and were of a single pole type, and the two colored wires coming from them were always connected so that the fuse was on the same line throughout the entire job, and should perchance one be connected on the wrong line, the man was required to change it, and given the impression it would only work one way—and he really believed it.

"An odd theory, which was of very short duration, originating with some of the superintendents of work at that period, was that cutouts of easy access were not necessary, and they have been known to install them between the floor and ceiling, and then nail the floors down and relay the carpets. When questioned regarding the use of them, they stated that they were a protecting device and were fused heavily enough so that they would not possibly blow out,



NORTH SIDE OF BASEMENT LOOKING TOWARDS REAR OF THE BUILDING.



PART OF STORE ON FIRST FLOOR. MANY ORIGINAL IDEAS OF MERCHANDISING ARE IN USE HERE.



and therefore it would not be necessary to take the floor up again. I recall this conversation between a householder and a young man in charge of the work, who later became an engineer of recognized ability.

"The matter of insulation was far from what it is today, when insulated conductors of 500,000 and 2,000,000-C. M. capacity are almost common. At the time of which I write it was impossible to obtain in the market insulated wire above No. 1 B & S gauge, and the writer recalls that he once found it necessary to use No. 4/0 copper in connecting two buildings, and when the order was sent for same he was informed by the office of the company who employed him that it was impossible to get insulated wire of such a size. The order was filled by sending to the job ten coils, each 100 feet long, of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch soft drawn copper and 25 pounds of tape, with specific instructions to cover the wire with two layers of tape to make the insulation equivalent to that which was insulated by machinery.

"Installations of wiring at the time of which we speak were plain open work held in position by wooden cleats, in direct contact with foreign substances, very similar to what is known as low potential bell wiring of today, or encased in wooden moulding, similar to moulding of today, but with no thought of depreciation or additional protection when wires passed through floors, etc.

"When concealed work was desired, the floors were raised, and in some cases the joists were notched out, similar to installing gas pipe, and both wires laid in one groove, or in separate grooves, without additional protection, and the floors relaid. It was very soon discovered that the nails driven through the floors cut the wires off, and the practice of boring joists below any possibility of a nail reaching the wire was then adopted, and the wire being drawn through the holes without any additional protection, as the insulation on the wire at that time was considered sufficient protection against any trouble.



“The rule regarding drop in voltage on the line was not regulated as it is today by sizes of copper. If an installation had been made, and it was found that the drop in voltage was too great on the upper floors, the matter was adjusted by using lamps of lower voltage as the distance increased from the generating point. There was a plant in this city where 86-volt lamps were used on the fifth floor and 92-volt lamps were used on the first floor and basement, to maintain normal candle power.

“The general idea in those days was—there is your machinery and material; install the work and make it go. This was the advice given to the superintendent in charge of the work, and if the matter did not turn out O. K., he was in for an explanation.

“But in reviewing matters of the above period, and considering that the highest voltage in use at that time was about the 100 mark, many things could be allowed without harm coming from them, which in this age of much higher voltages could and would not be considered a safe practice under any consideration. So, while it will be seen that work of installing incandescent lights was in those days very crude, other things were correspondingly in the embryo conditions, which made a great difference. Electricity has become at this time a master unit in the world’s mechanical and commercial work.”

OLD MINT DEED.

The government deed for the old mint property could not be found at the time of sale to the president of our Company, and the search for and final recovery of this deed would make an interesting story in itself. Suffice it to say that it was finally found in an old safe by Mr. Louis Kates, who gladly gave it to our president. It is a piece of parchment and the penmanship is above reproach.

The great seal of the United States, the seal of the City of Philadelphia, and the seal of the County of Philadelphia are all affixed—the latter two on the back of the deed. Mayor

Acting to the President

[illegible]

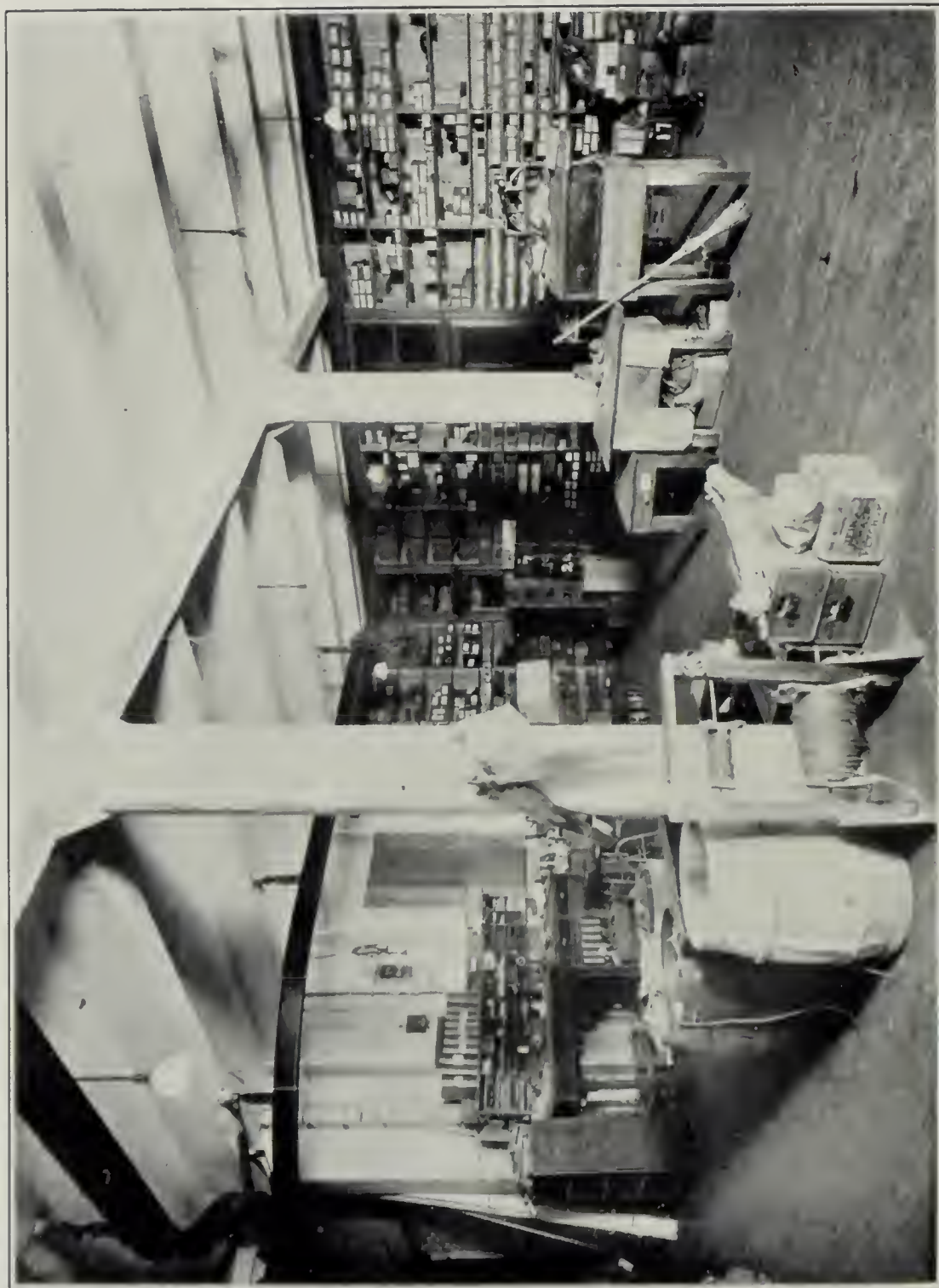
In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the Seal of the said Office, at Washington, the twelfth Day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth.

Andrew Jackson

20th June

Not Bright Sunday 1. 1860

THE GOVERNMENT DEED FOR THE OLD MINT.
SIGNED BY ANDREW JACKSON.
GREAT SEAL OF U. S. ATTACHED. SIZE 22x22 INCHES.



ONE CORNER OF THE SHIPPING ROOM. THE BUSIEST PART OF THE BUILDING.



John Swift, of Philadelphia, and Francis Hopkinson's signatures, as well as Andrew Jackson's signature, appear. The document is priceless to its present owner, but not quite so much so as another document, pertaining to the old mint, is to its owner. It will also be reproduced in the near future in the forthcoming history of the First United States Mint.

In the past two years data has been collected by us pertaining to the original mint property, which, when added to the finds made when the buildings were demolished, will make a book of considerable historical interest. Those fortunate enough to possess a copy of "Ye Olde Mint" booklet have some idea of what may be expected in the final write-up of information in our possession, a great deal of which has never been published. If you want a copy, send in your request now.

OUR CATALOG.

Because of the fact that it was necessary to move our business the past year, we were unable to get out a catalog as we had intended. Our last No. 16 catalog, however, is still up-to-date, but unfortunately the edition is exhausted.

We are now hard at work on a new catalog, which, like all other Stewart catalogs, will leave nothing to be desired in the way of a handy, up-to-date catalog of dependable electrical supplies. Where there are two grades of an article, we stock the better.

OUR CALENDARS—1913 AND 1914.

It seems fitting, in connection with this description of our new home, to say a few words about our 1913 calendar, which was a reproduction of Bryson's masterpiece, "In the Gloaming." Our calendars have always been works of art by the foremost artists. "In the Gloaming" is now the property of the founder and president of our business, and is on exhibition in our office, together with the original picture of our calendar for 1914 by E. Lamasure. He is famous in the art world, and we were particularly fortunate in securing a



painting by him, entitled, "Peak on Peak Against the Turquoise Blue." This original picture is also on exhibition, and represents a bird's eye view of the Yosemite Valley. This riot of nature, so familiar to travelers and those versed in the natural scenery of our great country, has as its most prominent features, El Capitan, Bridal Veil Falls, Sentinel Rock, Half Dome, Three Brothers, and the exquisite coloring of the canyons of the far West. This subject will be our calendar for the year 1914, and will be sent to those on our mailing list, as usual.

Our admiration for Mr. Lamasure's skill as an artist, coupled with our love for the historical, simply compelled us to purchase another one of his artistic gems, entitled, "The Cradle of Liberty." This original picture is a copy of Independence Hall from the Walnut street side. We are not positive, but think that this is the first time an artist with the reputation of Lamasure has ever painted Independence Hall from the rear.

His sunsets, and his pictures of Mt. Vernon and Monticello, have already made him famous. The two pictures in our possession will make him even still better known when our calendars are distributed for 1914.

The "Cradle of Liberty" calendar will only be sent to those who request it, and when the edition is exhausted, no more can be furnished. Our calendars are always ordered a year in advance, in order to get the choicest of the many choice art calendars, and at the same time secure for ourselves the privileges that go to the first purchasers.

OUR MUSEUM OF ELECTRICAL DEVICES.

It contains several letters of a testimonial character to the effect that electric light is a satisfactory illuminant.

It contains the catalog of the first electrical exhibition held in Philadelphia, in 1884.

It contains photographs of old arc lamps and dynamos; old pay rolls; the first order we ever received; the first order



RIGHT HAND SIDE OF OFFICE LOOKING FROM THE REAR OF THE SECOND FLOOR. NORTH SIDE.



LEFT HAND SIDE OF OFFICE LOOKING FROM THE REAR OF THE SECOND FLOOR. SOUTH SIDE.



book used by the founder of our business; his diaries, records and accounts.

It contains about 100 different kinds of electrical devices, made of wooden insulation—many of them the only ones now in existence.

The story and history of electricity is better told by these mute curiosities than any man can ever tell them.

We are anxious to make our museum of electrical things of educational value, and if you, the reader of these lines, have anything you are willing to give us for our museum, which will add to its interest, we trust you will do so.

The story of the beginning of things electrical should not be allowed to die with its participants, and if the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company can do anything to perpetuate the history of the early days of the electrical supply business, it is a duty that will not be shirked.

One hundred years from now gray-haired old men will be searching dusty shelves to find the names of the lamp sockets in use twenty years ago. We take them from the telegraph code book we used then. Even we have almost forgotten some of them. They are: Fort Wayne Jenny, Mather or Perkins, Hawkeye, Shaeffer, Brush-Swan, United States, Thomson-Houston, Sawyer-Man or Westinghouse, and the survivor of all of them, the Edison.

The prejudices and contests of the first days of electricity (we mean in speaking of electricity, the practical end) have given way to a broader viewpoint, and the narrow-minded, self-contained recluse of the electrical industry is displaced by the man who tries to be an instrument for the uplift of the most fascinating industry of importance on the face of the earth.

Co-operation is the spirit of the times in every line of trade, and the slogan of the electrical industry should always be, "All together all the time for everything electrical."



Our well-known trademark, illustrated elsewhere, stands for quality above ordinary expectations. It refers to the fact that the gold standard of coins issued by the old mint from 1792 to the time of the discontinuance of its operations, was above those afterwards issued. The gold then contained in a 10-dollar gold piece would today be worth ten dollars and sixty-five cents (\$10.65) as bullion, and was therefore about 6 per cent. more valuable than subsequent standards.

The bench and chairs illustrated on page five were made of oak joists from the Coinage building. These timbers were so hard that the cabinetmaker claimed extra compensation for his work. One hundred and twenty years of seasoning gave the wood an obstinacy which even a novice would suspect if he were to feel the weight of the furniture. The bench has a suitably engraved brass plate screwed on the top piece. These three pieces of unique furniture are now part of our office equipment.

About two dozen gavels and the same quantity of paper weights made of the same wood as the bench and chairs were made for us by Mr. James Barton, of Camden, N. J. These rare mementos were nearly all distributed at the cornerstone laying to those participating and a few special guests. Mr. Barton is the father of the head of our purchasing department, Mr. J. Elmer Barton, one of our oldest employees.

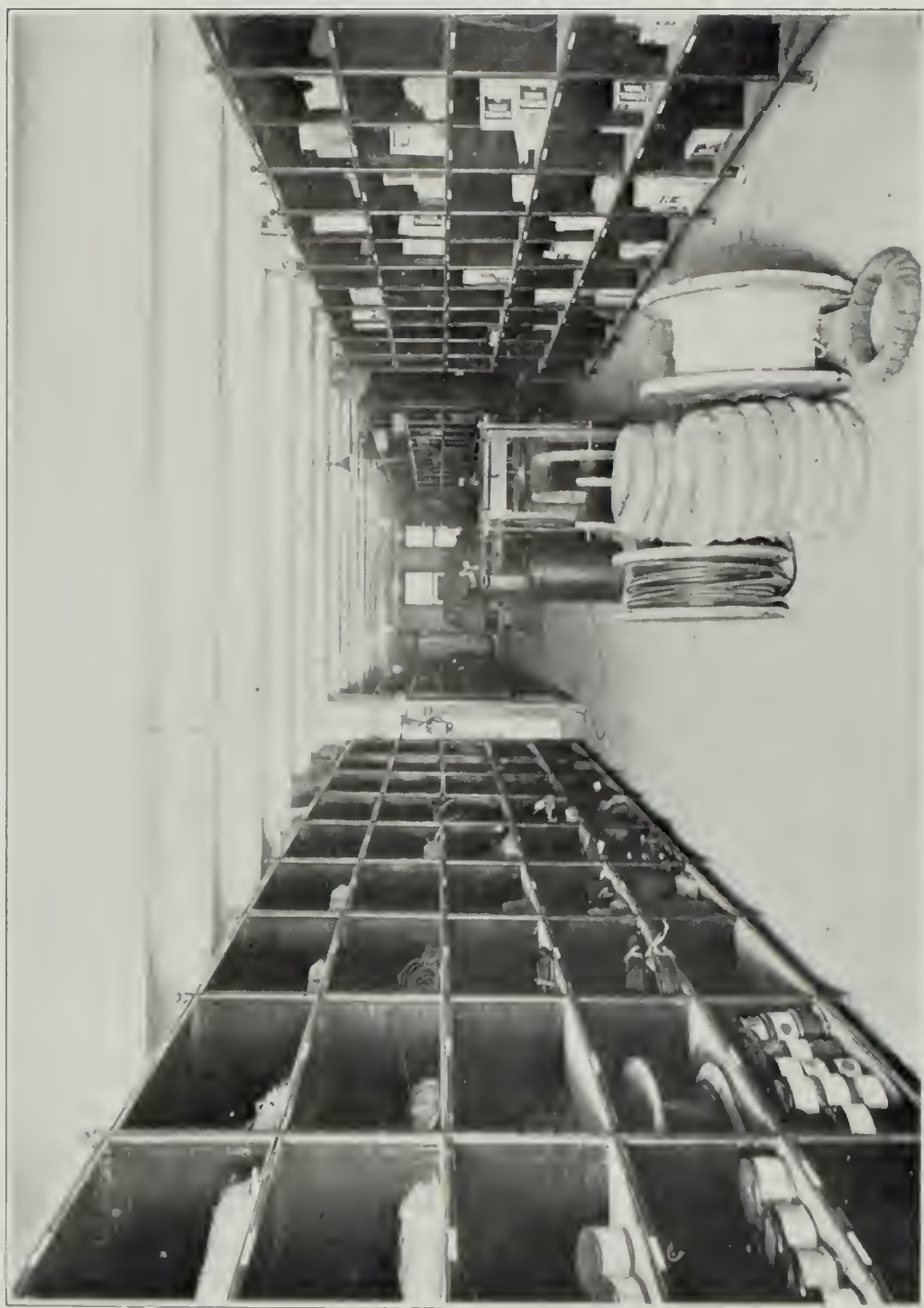
We moved our office force into our new building July 19, 1912, although we had stored stock in it for several months prior to that date.

The inspiring address of Mr. Raymond Courtney, head of our billing department, at our cornerstone laying, is saved for future use. Because of its prophecy, we would rather make use of it on our twenty-fifth anniversary than at this time.

A piece of twine two hundred feet long attached to the bottom of a small tin receptacle at each end makes a novel telephone. The twine must, however, be taut and allowed to vibrate without interference. The fakirs at country fairs have a long lecture that makes this simple contrivance hard to understand.



SOUTH SIDE OF THIRD FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS FRONT OF THE BUILDING. ALL SHELVING
ADJUSTABLE AND MADE OF STEEL.



NORTH SIDE OF THIRD FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE REAR, SHOWING STEEL SHELVING.



The following reminiscences appeared in the November, 1912, issue of the "Popular Engineer," and are copied here in the belief that they will be of some interest to our friends:

REMINISCENCES OF THE ELECTRICAL SUPPLY BUSINESS.

By Frank H. Stewart.

I am not an old man, and ordinarily a person of my age would not be in a position to write or say anything of an historical nature based on his own experience. The changes, however, in the electrical supply business have been so fast and great during the last twenty years that I am an old-timer, despite my intention to remain as young as I can, as long as I can.

I was born in May, 1873, and in May, 1892, my association with the electrical industry began. I commenced work with an electrical supply and contracting house located on the south side of Walnut street, a few doors above Eighth street. The store and office were located in the basement, and I was the office man or boy, at a salary of seven and one-half dollars per week. I was the bookkeeper and stenographer, and everything else around the office, because the business was small, or "just in its infancy," as I am frequently told today about my own business.

In September, 1892, I was put on the road selling incandescent lamps and supplies. The price of 16 c. p. bamboo filament lamps was forty cents each in 1,000 lots. My first trip lasted two weeks, and I was in practically every town in Pennsylvania that used electricity, east of Johnstown. There were very few electrical contractors in those days capable of doing wiring for electric lights. I cannot recall more than half a dozen, although a great many boys were engaged in putting up door bells, which were more of a novelty then than now. The electric lighting companies did nearly all the



wiring on their own circuits, and in most cases did not want anyone else to work on their lines. This tendency was fostered to some extent by the fact that they issued certificates for the underwriters, and held a rigid position.

In 1893, when the lamp litigation was on, I sold lamps as high as fifty-five cents each in thousand lots.

When I started in business for myself, in January, 1894, the first order for lamps I took was for eleven hundred, priced as follows:

16-c. p., 31 cents; 32-c. p., 51 cents; 50-c. p., 81 cents.

Better lamps are sold today at sixteen cents each than those sold at the prices mentioned above.

The test of quality in those days was simply the length of life. Nearly every town had its lamps noted for their age and blackness. It made no difference how much the candle power depreciated, providing the lamp would still burn. Lamps were measured in amperes and not in watts. I suppose watt meters were in use in those days, but I never saw a central station with one. When salesmen began to carry watt meters they were regarded with great suspicion. It was even risky to carry a volt meter. I have tested many a circuit unbeknown to the central station man. Nowadays things are different.

In 1892 there were four electrical supply salesmen traveling Eastern Pennsylvania and parts of New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. We always had an eye open for a big building on which our houses could bid on the wiring.

At that time a great many people were afraid to use electricity for illumination, and I recall a salesman who sold gas plants, who carried a series of clippings about lightning, short circuits, etc., etc., to prove that gas was safer than electricity. He even advised me to get out of the electrical business because he thought it had no future.

I compiled the first complete electrical supply catalog published in the City of Philadelphia. It had over one hundred pages, but the listings contained in the present day



NORTH SIDE OF FOURTH FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING,
SHOWING STEEL SHELVING.



SOUTH SIDE OF FOURTH FLOOR SHOWING ADJUSTABLE STEEL SHELVING AND LOOKING TOWARDS
THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING.



catalog make it look like a small price list. It does not contain poreclain tubes, iron conduit, non-metallic flexible conduit, flush switches, enclosed fuses, iron boxes, electric heating or cooking devices. It, however, does contain lots of things which are only a memory, such as unlined sockets, uncovered S-M cutouts, horse shoe cutouts, bug cutouts, fireproof cord, hard rubber tubing, vulca tubing, desk fans without guards, glass floor tubes, Remhof shade holders, dovetail rosettes, etc.

In the early days of electricity, the manufacturers of dynamos tried to furnish a complete line of wiring devices, and for a long time Brush-Swan, United States, Mather, Thomson-Houston, Westinghouse and Edison base fittings competed with each other for supremacy. There were other systems that helped to make the chaos of fittings a little more complicated, but I have forgotten the names. I remember the lamp and socket manufacturers worked together to standardize on the Edison base a few years ago with beneficial results to all concerned.

The low tension arc lamp, to work two in series on 110 volts, was followed by the enclosed arc lamp. Tens of thousands of these one-time efficient products went to the scrap heaps in about fifteen years.

I well remember the howl that went up when the underwriters very wisely required an entrance switch on each building. Every improvement in those days which meant a little extra cost was met by criticism. I put out a few new appliances, such as the metal thread socket handle, wood moulding blocks, adjustable handles, and threaded brass pipe for cluster stems; but it was hard work to introduce a new thing.

When I entered the electrical supply business, porcelain, slate and fibre were displacing wood and rubber as insulations. I remember very well the wood cleats, ceiling rosettes, cutouts, snap switches, receptacles, attachment plugs, etc., etc. I have a collection of these wooden antiques now.

Porcelain was very troublesome at first because of its



warping and unequal shrinkages, but of late years this seems to have been entirely overcome. Slate and fibre had to be used on some devices for a long time because of the trouble with porcelain. The first fibre sample grip ever made in this country was made for me out of electrical sheet fibre. It is still in good condition.

In these days of co-operation, when it is possible to sit down at a banquet with several hundred electrical people, as I did a few nights ago, it seems a long hark back to the first successful attempt at co-operation, when Mr. Vallee and I called a meeting of the allied electrical interests together on a common basis, i. e., Credit.

The wireless telephone and telegraph, like the flaming arc lamp and the Mazda lamp, seem recent; but it has been many years ago since Mr. Collins, the pioneer inventor of wireless telephony, invited me to witness the first public demonstration of a working wireless telephone. He worked hard, and is entitled to the recognition given him.

My connection with the electrical business has been interesting. I have listened to those who were experimenting almost before I was born. I have heard of the times when bare wires were used, and the leakages down the metallic decorations of the wall papers would make the onlookers think of electrical snakes.

I have talked with men who worked on the first telephones, made the first electric lamps, the first insulated wires, the first dynamos; but they would never trouble themselves with recording their experiences. Many of them are gone and the history is lost.

The cornerstone of the new building was laid in the afternoon of January 27, 1912. The photographs reproduced were taken by representatives of the Philadelphia newspapers. The following news item appeared in the "Philadelphia



NORTH SIDE OF FIFTH FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE FRONT.



SOUTH SIDE OF FIFTH FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE REAR.



Inquirer" of January 28th. Similar articles appeared in the "Public Ledger," and other newspapers:

OLD MINT BUILDING CORNERSTONE LAID.

ELECTRIC COMPANY WILL OCCUPY NEW STRUCTURE TO BE ERECTED ON HISTORIC SITE.

Before hundreds of persons the cornerstone of the Old Mint Building, which will be erected on the site of the old United States Mint, at 37 North Seventh street, was laid yesterday afternoon with impressive exercises. The building will be occupied by the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company.

The stone was laid by Wilfred Jordan, curator of Independence Hall, and the invocation pronounced by Rev. Frederick Blazer, pastor of the Pitman, N. J., Baptist Church. The benediction was pronounced by Rev. Alexander Corson, pastor of the Paulsboro, N. J., Methodist Church. Mr. Stewart, head of the firm of Frank H. Stewart, made a short address, in which he spoke of the historic site that his company had selected for its new headquarters.

In the cornerstone was placed a black lead box. Its contents were as follows: Eight silver dollars, of dates from 1795 to 1803; ten silver half-dollars, 1795-1817; five quarters, 1815-25; five dimes, 1821-31; ten pennies, 1794-1829; seven one-half cent pieces, 1793-1828, all coined in the old mint, and other coins bearing the stamp of 1911, and other mementos.

The address referred to was as follows, and is copied from the "Peirce School Alumni Journal," of April, 1912:

MR. STEWART'S ADDRESS.

Every one of us here assembled owes a tribute to the past and a legacy to the future, and the laying of this cornerstone is a partial discharge of our duty as I see it.

Within the boundaries of these walls the first great men of our nation have stood. The old building we tore down was the first United States mint, and also the first public building erected by authority of Congress. It was erected in



1792, and the first coins made here were coined from silver household plate delivered personally by Washington. They are now known as Washington half-dimes, and he referred to them in his fourth annual message to Congress. The first regular coinage of copper began in 1793; silver, in 1794, and gold, in 1795.

The old mint was in operation for a period of about forty years before the removal to Juniper and Chestnut streets. During that time 148,885,742 pieces of gold, silver and copper were coined, having a total value of \$45,047,733, which today would not be enough to give each person in the United States two pieces of money each, and I am sure that we all have more than two pieces each today. The old mint was a hard-worked institution. It began work at five o'clock each morning and closed at six in the evening, with only two holidays a year—Christmas and the Fourth of July.

When Washington caused this ground to be purchased for the purpose of erecting a mint, the United States was bounded on the west by the Mississippi and on the south by Florida, which reached like a crescent from its southernmost point to the Mississippi, so that we were hemmed in on both the south and the west by the Spanish possessions.

Napoleon was then a young lieutenant on furlough. Franklin had just died, and the United States troops, which then amounted to a force of 5,000 men, were largely engaged in fighting Indians in the northwestern territory, Ohio and Michigan.

We had no navy and paid an annual tribute to the Barbary pirates.

The cotton gin was not yet invented; gas lights, railroads and waterworks in this country were as yet unknown.

Philadelphia was then the Capital of the United States.

The coinage of money began a long time ago—about 500 years before Christ—and specimens now existing prove that the Greeks and Romans could do artistic work with crude appliances.



SIXTH FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE FRONT. THIS CUT SHOWS A LITTLE MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE TOP FLOOR OF OUR BUILDING.



NORTH SIDE OF SIXTH FLOOR LOOKING TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE BUILDING,
EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH CEILING.



It is recorded that Thales of Miletus, 600 years before Christ, discovered that a piece of amber well rubbed had the power of attracting light bodies, as a magnet attracts a needle. Franklin, in 1750, proved that lightning and electricity are one and the same thing. Shortly after, he invented the lightning rod, on which there has been practically no improvement since, and it is interesting to me, at least, to mention that my father sold lightning rods on the western prairies of Indiana and Illinois for a period of seventeen years before and after the Civil War.

The first telegraph line in this country was in 1844. The telephone was patented in 1876, and only this week I heard Mr. Cattell say that he worked for Jay Cooke, who had the first telephone in this section, and that he would frequently be called upon to repeat telephone conversations back to the sender, in order to prove that articulate speech could actually be transmitted over a wire. He said that the great majority of people thought they were being fooled by some trick played by some one in concealment nearby.

The first practical arc lamp was invented by Charles Brush, of Cleveland, in 1878, and the man for whom I worked always claimed that he was an errand boy for Brush, and that he also at one time traveled with a circus exhibiting a portable electric light plant, which was just as great a curiosity as the wild beasts of tropical jungles.

The first incandescent central station in this country was the New York-Edison Company, started in 1882. The first central station in Pennsylvania was in Sunbury, and I well remember the old bi-polar machine I first saw there in 1892, while making my first trip on the road.

It was told me that Edison himself ordered every one out of the building before he started the plant, because he did not know what might happen.

The completion of this building helps make good a prediction I made to my friend, John Mustard, of the Wagner Company, when we as boys boarded on Green street, this city.



I told him then that we would undoubtedly live to see the time when electrical supply stores would be occupying whole buildings. We have occupied a whole building, with warehouses besides, for years, but when I made the suggestion I had no idea of the short length of time necessary for its accomplishment.

This building represents my life's work. It is built of enduring steel and concrete. It is the best that I can do.

When the old building was erected in 1792, the great men of the nation did the work now done by subordinates, but in most cases they did things more thoroughly than we do them today.

Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Rittenhouse and Boudinot stood here one hundred and twenty years ago, and, while our efforts cannot compare with theirs, we can, however, be just as true and honest, so let us work that the glory of being pioneers in a great business of unprecedented growth and opportunities may never be tarnished by the lapse of time.

(Placing of lead box in cornerstone by Wilfred Jordan, Curator of Independence Hall, at this point.)

I endeavored to make the contents of this box of real interest to future generations. It contains a request that the finder of box and contents replace it in any new building which may be erected on this site:

Letters from L. B. Moffett, Reverend Frederick Blazer, John H. Landis, Creth & Sullivan.

Names of officers and employees of the Frank H. Stewart Electric Company.

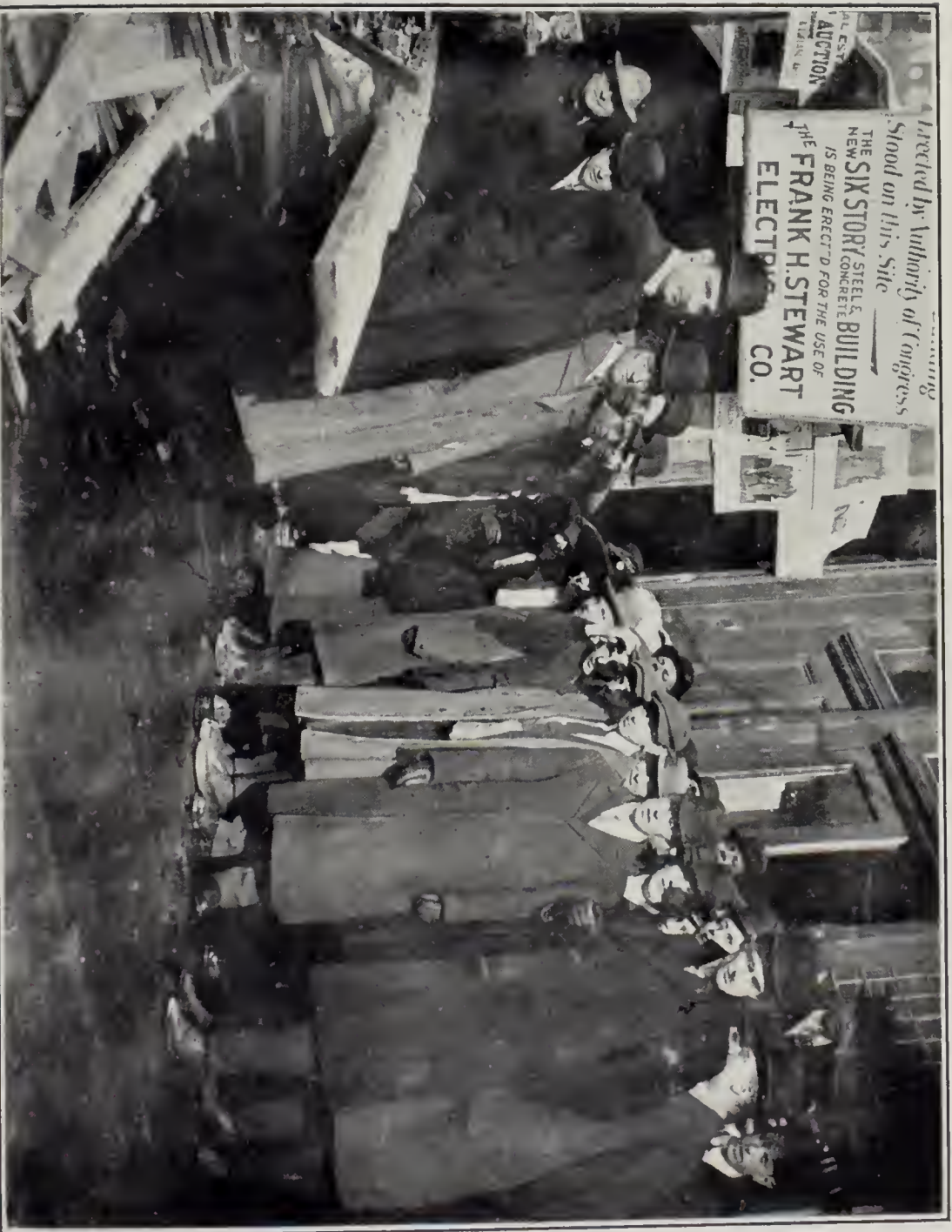
Business cards of architect and contractors doing work on the building.

Pictures of the Old Mint.

"Ye Olde Mint" booklet.

History of the Stewart family of New Jersey.

Membership lists of Trimble, Ionic and Rising Star Lodges.



PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF A FEW OF THOSE PRESENT AT THE THE LAYING
OF THE CORNERSTONE.



WILFRED JORDAN PLACING DOCUMENTS IN CORNERSTONE. FRANK H. STEWART
IN BACKGROUND.



Title pages of all the Philadelphia newspapers.

8—Silver Dollars1795 to 1803
9—Half-Dollars1795 to 1817
5—Quarter-Dollars1815 to 1825
5—Dimes1821 to 1831
7—Half-cents1793 to 1828
10—Cents1794 to 1829

(All made on these premises.)

The dates represent the range and are not consecutive. Also four coins dated 1911; a Columbian half-dollar, 1892, and a coin, silver dollar size, of Ludwig the 16th, dated 1775; membership cards in sixteen different organizations, and a gavel made from the old mint wood.

Graduation program of Peirce School Commencement, January 24, 1912, containing names of graduates.

Two stubs of box-seat tickets for Peirce School Commencement exercises.

We have a great many of Peirce School graduates connected with our business, and a great measure of our success is due to them. The secretary of our business is a graduate; our treasurer is a former student; all of our bookkeepers and stenographers and most of our clerks came direct from that justly celebrated institution to us.

In our early coinage it was the plan to have each coin have a bullion value equal to its face. That accounts for the large copper cents. The rise in price of silver bullion also accounts for the fact that there were no silver dollars coined between 1804 and 1836. The size of the dollar was prescribed by law, and the coinage was discontinued because of the great loss.

The gold standard has been changed since the coinage was discontinued on this site. A ten-dollar gold piece made here would now be worth ten dollars and sixty-five cents as bullion.

I do not think any excavation ever made in this city was more interesting in finds than the one made here.



Two old cellars with barred iron windows, seven wells, one large vault; coins in various states of coinage; testing cups, iron tools, and a great many other interesting things were found. The bricks and mortar underground were as hard as rock, and the fact that the builders are behind in their work is largely due to obstacles encountered underground.

The house in which Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence stood only a stone's throw from the old mint. The Penn National Bank, one of Philadelphia's many solid and substantial financial institutions, now occupies the site of the Declaration House. It seems mighty strange that with all the historical interest displayed by Philadelphians that some organization is not formed to at least take photographs and measurements of the interiors and exteriors of buildings such as the one which stood at the southwest corner of Seventh and Market Streets.

There are no more Declaration Houses, Fort Rittenhouses, St. James Episcopal Churches or Old Mints on Seventh Street. They are forever gone, and history seems to be saved like it is made—largely by accident.

Thomas Donaldson wrote a book describing how he tried to save the building in which Jefferson lodged and wrote the Declaration of Independence. Fifteen years after the destruction of "one of the most historic buildings on the face of the globe," the oak and cherry joists and other parts of the Declaration house rotted on a lot somewhere in Philadelphia, waiting for a man with a little money and some inclination, who, it is sad to say, never came.

There is an interesting article in Scharf and Wescott's History of Philadelphia, under the heading "Electric Lights." It states that 47 electric lights were put in operation on Chestnut Street December 3, 1881. It mentions the Continental Hotel, Girard House, Public Ledger, Philadelphia Record, new Public Buildings, new Pennsylvania Railroad Station at Broad Street, and others as using electric lights in 1882. The greater number, if not all, of these concerns generated their own current. This history was published and copyrighted in 1884.



ONE OF THE EMBLEMS ON THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING.



SYMBOLICAL MEDALLION AND ORNAMENTS ON THE FRONT
OF THE NEW BUILDING.



IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR EAGLES TO SPEAK THIS ONE
WOULD DO SO, IT HAS EVERYTHING BUT LIFE.
THE MINT EAGLE WAS A NOTED BIRD.



ODDS AND ENDS.

Until a few years ago, there was a maker of glass articles on the west side of Seventh street, just below Filbert, who once worked for Maxim, and he told the writer of these lines that it used to take him a whole day to make one complete incandescent lamp.

The first searchlight of any consequence was located on top of one of the principal buildings at the Chicago World's Fair. It is now in use on top of Mt. Lowe in California. A Philadelphian operated it at Chicago.

Patents on electrical devices have never amounted to very much. If a thing is good it is copied or improved. Edison is credited with saying that "a patent gives you a right to go into court and fight for it." If patents were good there would be fewer licensees and licensors, and more competition.

Automobiles and aeroplanes without electrical ignition would be very few and mighty dangerous.

The first tin electric shades, and the first electric light portables, and the first electric annunciators, were made in Philadelphia by concerns still in business.

The first trolley cars in Philadelphia ran on Catharine and Bainbridge streets, and were nicknamed "Modern Juggernauts." A great many people were injured by them because they thought they did not move faster than horse-cars. At this time straw as a foot-warming device disappeared from street cars.

At one time there were about ten different electric light central stations in Philadelphia.

Speaking tube is the appendix of the electrical supply business. It is a relic of the days of bell hangers, and none dare leave it out of their catalogs now.



Our museum contains a letter written by a captain of industry of the electrical business, in which he says he owes a certain man two dollars, which he would like to pay but can't. The letter is twenty-three years old.

In the coal region of Pennsylvania there is a town in a valley, and years ago a power line was stretched across the valley with the customary and necessary sagging of the wires. Something happened which prevented the current from flowing across, and it was decided that the current could travel down hill, but not up. It may make you laugh now, but such things were not jokes thirty years ago.

A now well-known switch manufacturer worked for the old T.-H. Co. and did some of the very first arc light wiring with bare wire and staples.

One manager of a factory he wired told him he could not expect electricity to flow over a wire which was choked every few feet by a staple. When he had to take the wires down, because of wet floors and numerous grounds, the manager said: "I told you so. You are not as smart as you think you are. A little common knowledge of the science of electricity would help you some, young man." Any one who has the pleasure of knowing the switch maker can relish the above, because he has always been in the front ranks.

With 80-cent gas in Philadelphia, the demand for dynamos should increase.

The time will come when there will be nothing but 110-volt and 220-volt incandescent lamps.

The old formula for finding a superintendent of an electric light plant was to trail down the arc lamp line. You would find him at the first untrimmed lamp with his spurs on. Things are different now.

They used to paint copper wire with paint of different colors in order to keep track of the different circuits. One



day Mr. Hewitt was hanging his wire out to dry and a bull got tangled in it, to the great detriment of the inventor of many electrical devices. Mr. Hewitt has many good stories about old wines he has found in old wells, old vaults and other odd places.

The first man to carry porcelain tubes on the road kept his samples cleaned with tooth paste and tooth brush. Such samples have never been seen since. He only had three sizes, 5-16 x 3, 5-16 x 4 and 5-16 x 6, and was glad to get orders for lots of 100 at a time.

Each manufacturer of iron conduit used to have a special thread, and each manufacturer of enclosed fuses used to have special designs and lengths. Standardization of these things has helped the electrical industry immensely.

The old underwriters' insulation had a great many of the qualities of good insulation. So did the old original rubber covered wires.

We have just received a flush rotary switch from the Betz building, which was sold by us to the contractor who wired the building when it was erected. There were over 200 of these switches, and they were the very first flush switches made by the Perkins Company, who made them as a favor to us.

It was a great discovery when Philadelphia's scientific men discovered that water would cause a fire. Since then, all fires of unknown origin have been caused by electricity.

Solar heat and water power will supply all the electrical energy 100 years hence. There is no use of worrying about coal.

The present Mazda lamp is not the last word in lamp making. Ten years from now tungsten lamps will be classed with bamboo filaments.

The little glass tube in the top of the first dry batteries was a necessity. Without it they would swell up and burst.



The first incandescent lamps had enough platinum in them to make a jeweler jealous. With the advancement of the art of lamp making, the length and thickness of the piece of platinum wire has gradually decreased.

The first 220-volt tungsten lamps ever put in commercial use, went into the library of Peirce School, Philadelphia.

The first flush push button switches were frequently mistaken for automatic gas keys—the idea of one light and one dark button being first used in electric gas lighting.

The mechanism of the Paiste switch was the only one of the early switches to stand the test of usage, and eventually become a standard switch. H. T. Paiste can tell you about it. Three different competing manufacturers made money out of the Paiste switch.

Knostrain Bushings and Stewart Cord Adjusters are our own patented articles. We also own a patent on the metal thread socket handle, which displaced the all-wood handle years ago.

The first practical electric railway line in this country was started in Kansas City in 1884. There were thirteen electric street railways in the United States, with forty-eight miles of track, January 1, 1888.

Paul Jablochhoff's so-called electric candles consisted of two vertical carbons, with baked kaolin between them. They were a great novelty.

The first flaming arc lamps in Philadelphia were installed in front of a newspaper office on Market Street.

Vacuum tube lighting is a system capable of great possibilities, but the distorted color values are a serious handicap now.

Nernst lamps were first installed in Philadelphia in the tunnel of the station at 32d and Market Streets.



The first isolated plant in Philadelphia was installed in Stetson's hat factory in 1880. It was a 60 K. W. machine. Mr. I. Walker told me this. He was there at the time.

The first telephone in Sharptown, N. J., was placed in Wriggins' store and was a great curiosity. James Pate, an expert well digger, said it was a scientific fact that stars could be seen from the bottom of a well while the sun was shining. He, with several others, listened to someone at the Woodstown end of the line tell about the wonders of the telephone, but could not be coaxed to see in the little rubber mouthpiece the transmitted image of the fellow talking at Woodstown. Pate was made to believe his eyesight was defective.

Sea water is not a good substitute for sal ammoniac for recharging carbon cylinder batteries, even if it will make a bell ring. We, however, knew one man who used it until he got too lazy to go to the beach after it.

An operation job of houses a square long in West Philadelphia had one set of batteries to light all the gas jets and ring all the door-bells. This electrician was a little more conscientious than the one who cut his wire in three-foot lengths and doubled it, and then left two ends sticking out each of the switch and light outlets. This was rough wiring with a vengeance.

The invention of the bamboo filament was due to an inspiration, if not perspiration. The inventor was chewing the rim of a palm-leaf fan on a hot day, and in desperation he ripped the protecting edge from the fan and carbonized it. It was the standard lamp filament for a long time.

When we tried to get a patent on an incandescent lamp, frosted or colored on the inside of the globe, we got tired of the job. We still think it is a good idea, but could not find the exact words in the dictionary necessary to evade the patent on an inner globe open at both ends and coated inside with a light increasing substance.



J. W. Parker had a lot of fun with a windowful of feathers blown around by a sturdy C. & C. electric fan. He invented the scheme of making one fan run fifteen others. It consisted of loosening the blade set screws and placing the fans at the proper angles in an enclosed bulk window. The Bourse was not there then.

The P. & B. paint odor will ever be remembered by the errand boys and helpers who painted moulding and capping years ago. If smell had any virtue, it was unique. It caused an investigation at 806 Walnut Street.

Inaccurate switchboard instruments cause lots of trouble.

Mazdak was a Persian reformer and founder of a religious sect about fourteen hundred and fifty years ago. Mazda is said to be the Persian word for sun.

Dry batteries are manufactured and rated at a temperature of seventy degrees. Cold weather reduces the amperage reading, and hot weather increases it. A dry battery can be frozen so it will not work, and it can also be dried out with the same result.

Chas. Hewitt is an electrician whose experiences go back to the invention of the electric annunciator. He was once threatened with arrest as a nuisance because of a crowd he attracted at 4th and Chestnut Streets about the year 1869, with a "tremolo," now known as an electric bell. The police made him stop ringing his electric bell because the people blocked the street. He is a customer of ours of many years' standing,—a famous sportsman and a good citizen of New Jersey. He installed a watchman's clock system in a Philadelphia bank on North 6th Street, using gravity battery cells. He told the President of the bank to recharge the batteries with blue stone when exhausted. Some time afterwards the system was out of order, because some marble-yard chippings of a bluish color were used in place of the chemical blue stone.

STEWART'S
OLD MINT
GOLD STANDARD